

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

28 April 1982

25X1

Nicaragua Briefing

I. Introduction

A. Since coming to power in July 1979, the Sandinistas have followed a gradualist strategy for the establishment of a Marxist-Leninist state, closely patterned after the Cuban model.

1. While concentrating on the buildup of the military, the militia, the security services, and the Sandinista mass organizations, the regime has gradually restricted the activities of the private business sector, the independent media, and the opposition political parties.

B. In recent months, Sandinista concerns about a growing insurgency, waning popularity, a deteriorating economy, and the failure of the left to achieve power in El Salvador have caused Managua to move more rapidly than originally planned toward a one-party state.

1. As a consequence, they have accelerated efforts to consolidate their grip over Nicaragua by bearing down on moderate groups, blaming the US for all their problems, and continuing their military buildup and subversive activities in Central America.

25X1

SECRET

II. Internal Developments

A. The regime recently declared a state of emergency that suspends most civil liberties--including habeas corpus--throughout the country.

1. The Sandinistas are using the state of emergency to whip-up anti-US hysteria, intimidate the opposition, and strengthen their network of neighborhood defense committees and the militia as instruments of social control and regimentation.
2. Militia recruitment drives have been stepped up, and those government employees who had resisted previous recruitment efforts now have been coerced into enrolling.



25X1

3. Neighborhood committees--patterned after the Cuban model--have been instructed to increase their vigilance over the population and report "counter-revolutionary" activities to the security forces.
4. The Sandinistas also have imposed full censorship on the independent media.
 - a. All press editions of the prestigious independent newspaper La Prensa must now be submitted to security officials for review before publication.

SECRET

- b. All radio newscasts and political opinion programs have been prohibited, except those transmitted over a government-controlled network that independent radio stations now must join.
- 5. Together with the independent media, moderate opposition groups have been the principal casualties of the state of emergency.

- a. Many political party and labor union militants have been arrested on unspecified security grounds.

- b. Emergency travel restrictions have been imposed, and many opposition leaders have been informed that they cannot leave the country.

- c. Sandinista thugs are sent out periodically to harass and intimidate the moderates.

- d. Businessmen have been hit with recent economic decrees that allow the regime to control commerce and production and impose "war taxes."

B. Relations between the Sandinistas and local Catholic Church leaders also have deteriorated as the bishops have continued to resist the regime's authoritarian methods.

- 1. In February, the bishops issued their strongest public attack yet on the regime's human rights record in a letter denouncing Sandinista actions against the Miskito Indians.
- 2. The Sandinistas in turn increased their pressure by temporarily closing a Church-owned radio station,

SECRET

taking steps to control the curriculum in the country's large Catholic school system, and imposing Cuban textbooks on some of the schools.

C. Increased repression in recent months has led several opposition leaders to conclude that a mixed economy and pluralism will not survive under the Sandinistas.

1. Alfonso Robelo, Adan Fletes--head of the Social Christian Party--and other opposition leaders apparently have given up trying to offset the Sandinistas' move toward totalitarianism from inside Nicaragua, and they have gone into exile to carry out their opposition to the regime.

2. Other moderates who still remain in Nicaragua reportedly are making preparations to flee the country or go into hiding.

D. Self-exiled Sandinista revolutionary hero Eden Pastora also has given up on his former comrades in Managua, recently accusing them of betraying the original democratic principles of the revolution.

1. Pastora's denunciation of the Sandinista leadership has had an unsettling political and psychological effect in Nicaragua.

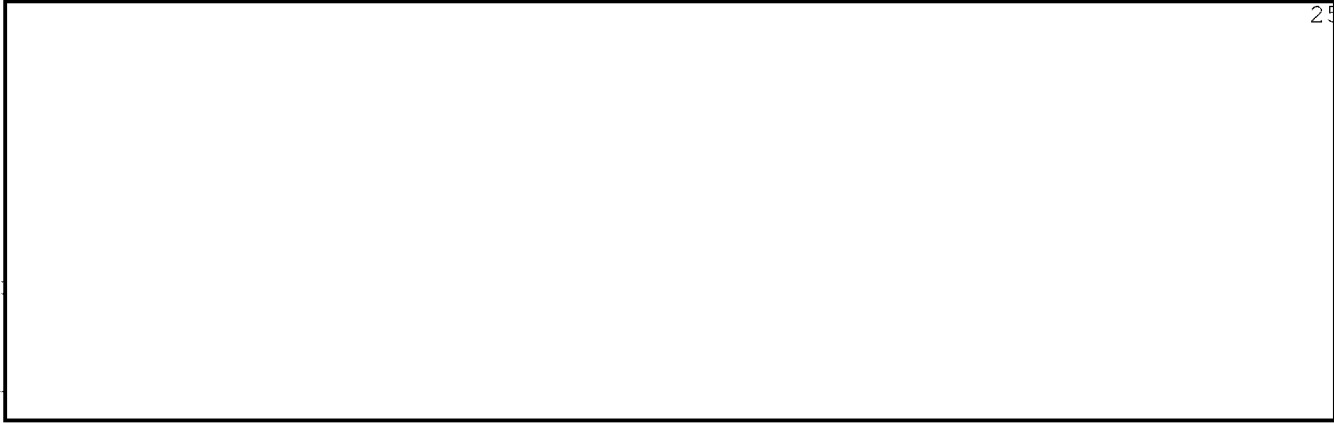
- a. Wall paintings reportedly have begun to appear in Managua and other areas suggesting popular support for Pastora.

2. The Sandinistas--fearing Pastora's potential as a catalyst for widespread popular opposition--have accused him of treason, and are likely to lose little

SECRET

time in targetting him and his followers for
assassination.

III. Repression of Miskito Indians



25X1

C. Some 10,000 Miskito Indians have taken refuge in
Honduras.

D. Others have been forcibly resettled at three tent camps
further in the Nicaraguan interior



25X1

IV. External Developments

A. Nicaragua's relations with its immediate neighbors--
Honduras and Costa Rica--have deteriorated markedly
during the past few months.

1. Both Tegucigalpa and San Jose have become
increasingly alarmed by Nicaragua's growing military
capability.
2. Managua in turn is concerned by the activities of
anti-Sandinista guerrilla bands operating from bases
in Honduras and Costa Rica.
 - a. The Sandinistas have retaliated by increasing
diplomatic pressure on San Jose and by stepping
up covert activities in support of violent
Honduran radicals.

b. As their military strength grows, however, the Sandinistas probably will become more belligerent, and the danger of a major regional conflict is likely to grow over time.

B. Managua, meanwhile, continues--in close collaboration with Havana--to promote insurgency throughout Central America.

1. While this effort remains focused on El Salvador, the Sandinistas also are maintaining their aid to Guatemalan guerrillas and are increasing assistance to Honduran terrorists in preparation for armed struggle there.

2. Types of assistance include:

- a. Infiltration of arms--primarily into El Salvador, but also into Guatemala and Honduras--by land, sea, and air. (Recently, the Sandinistas stepped up their supply of weapons and ammunition to the Salvadoran rebels to aid disruption of the elections.)
- b. Paramilitary training in Sandinista Army camps.
- c. Safehaven--including facilities for the operation of Salvadoran guerrilla headquarters in Nicaraguan territory--and transit to Cuba for training.
- d. Occasional financial subsidies.
- e. Nicaraguan advisers working with leftists in several Central American countries (represen-

SECRET

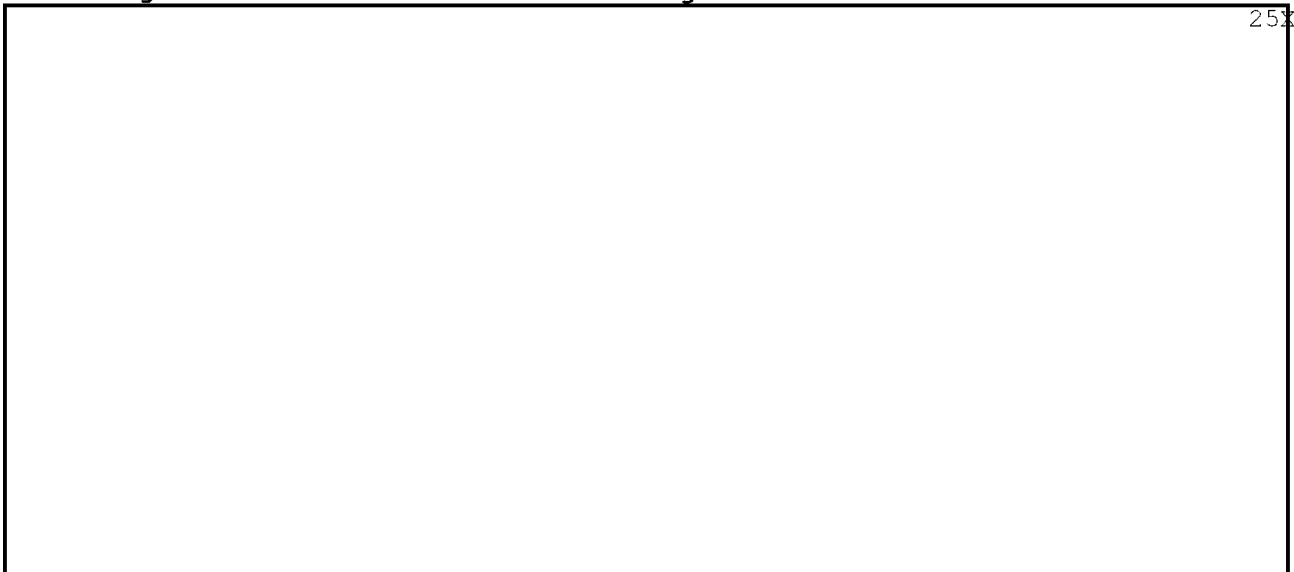
tatives of various radical groups also frequently consult with high-ranking Sandinistas in Managua).

V. Military Buildup

A. Meanwhile, the Nicaraguan military buildup continues unabated, further upsetting the regional military balance.

1. Regular army strength has stabilized at about 15,000-20,000, but the expansion of reserve and militia units continues.
2. The regular reserve force now numbers some 20,000, and a new drive to recruit more irregular militia has pushed the total reserve figure to over 50,000.
3. Thus the total armed strength available to the Sandinistas, not including the national police, is some 70,000 personnel.
4. In contrast, Costa Rica has no armed forces and Honduras has only 13,000.

B. New garrison areas also are being constructed.



25x1

SECRET

Page Denied

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Denied